

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 04823 302138Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2519
INFO COMDT COGARD WASHDC
COMPACAREA COGARD SAN FRANCISCO
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
NAVSUPFORANTARCTICA DET DELTA CHCH
CINCPAC
USCGC BURTON ISLAND

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 4823

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SWEL, OCLR, NZ
SUBJECT: USCGC BURTON ISLAND

REF: WELLINGTON 4753

1. USCGC BURTON ISLAND DEPARTED WELLINGTON DECEMBER 30 AMIDST
OUTPOURING OF PUBLIC THANKS AND GOODWILL FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL
WORK SHIP'S CREW HAS DONE IN THE WELLINGTON AREA SINCE THE HEAVY
RAINS AND FLOODING OF DECEMBER 20 (SEE REFTEL). IN SEPARATE
TELEGRAMS TO AMBASSADOR AND CAPTAIN FOURNIER, MAYOR OF LOWER
HUTT (HARDEST HIT SECTION OF HUTT VALLEY) HAS CONVEYED "HEARFELT
GRATITUDE FOR WONDERFUL HELP IN FLOOD DISASTER...IN FAMOUS
TRADITION OF YOUR COUNTRY." CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF NEW ZEALAND
POLICE HAS SENT SEPARATE MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION.

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2. EVENING POST OF DECEMBER 29 CARRIED FOLLOWING EDITORIAL
TITLED "A WELCOME VISITOR":

QUOTE. THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD SHIP BURTON ISLAND
WHICH SAILS FOR THE ANTARCTIC TODAY AFTER A 10-DAY STAY
IN THE CAPITAL, LEAVES BEHIND A FINE REPUTATION

FOR BEING A "GOOD NEIGHBOR".

THE BURTON ISLAND ARRIVED THE DAY BEFORE THE RAINS
CAME. AS SOON AS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION
BECAME APPARENT ON THE MONDAY, THE SHIP'S HELICOPTER
HAS VOLUNTEERED TO AUGMENT THE DESPERATELY THIN RESOURCES
AVAILABLE TO THE AUTHORITIES IN THIS AREA.

ON TUESDAY THE AMERICANS FLEW INTO THE ISOLATED
MAKARA REGION AND THEN LATER FERRIED DOCTORS AND POLICE
FROM LOWER HUTT TO WELLINGTON.

LATER IN THE WEEK, CREW FROM THE SHIP CAME FORWARD
WITH SLEEVES ROLLED UP AND SHOVELS AT THE READY TO HELP
DIG OUT HOMES IN STOKES VALLEY.

EARLIER THIS WEEK THE HELICOPTER WAS IN ACTION AGAIN
SEARCHING FOR A MISSING YACHTSMAN IN THE COOK STRAIT.
UNHAPPILY THE SEARCH WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL BUT THE BURTON
ISLAND'S CAPTAIN, CAPTAIN FOURNIER MADE IT CLEAR
WHENEVER A LIFE WAS IN DANGER, HIS MEN AND THEIR EQUIPMENT
WERE AT THE READY.

"A LIFE IS A LIFE, NO MATTER WHAT NATIONALITY",
HE SAID.

WE'VE BEEN HAPPY TO ACT AS HOSTS TO THE BURTON
ISLAND. IN SPITE OF THE WEATHER WE HOPE THEY
TAKE AWAY HAPPY MEMORIES OF OUR CITY AND THEY'RE
WELCOME BACK ANY TIME THEY WANT TO COME. UNQUOTE.
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3. THROUGHOUT PAST TEN DAYS "BURTON ISLAND" HAS BEEN SUBJECT
OF NUMEROUS T.V., RADIO AND PRINT MEDIA REPORTS ON ITS FLOOD
RELIEF ACTIVITIES AND SEARCH/RESCUE MISSION. TOGETHER WITH A
GIFT-GIVING VISIT FROM THE SHIP'S "FATHER CHRISTMAS" TO THE
WELLINGTON HOME OF COMPASSION, "BURTON ISLAND" HAS DIRECTLY
TOUCHED AND BOOSTED THE MORALE OF HUNDREDS OF WELLINGTONIANS
AND ENGENDERED AN ADDITIONAL, LARGE MEASURE OF GOODWILL TOWARD
THE U.S. THROUGHOUT NEW ZEALAND.
SELDEN

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